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MEMORANDUM FOR: Inspector General

THROUGH : Deputy Director (Support)

SUBJECT : Personnel Recruiting Practices

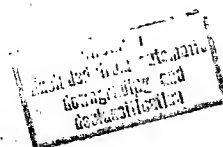
REFERENCE : Memo for DD/S fr IG dtd 10 May 63 (DDS 63-2003), same subject

1. Referenced memorandum describes complaints made by personnel of the Office of Central Reference concerning Agency recruitment practices. Specifically, several female college graduates employed in OCR stated that they had been urged by Personnel Recruitment Officers to apply for clerical and secretarial positions on the grounds that no professional positions were available for them. They further stated that upon reporting for duty, having accepted clerical/secretarial positions, they learned that there were professional openings and succeeded in transferring to them. After transfer, they indicate that they were assigned to work with other people of comparable qualifications and performing comparable work who had been appointed at higher grades.

2. We have made a thorough review of the ten specific cases which were identified by the Inspector [ ] to illustrate the reasons for these complaints. Nine of these ten individuals entered on duty in the IAS having applied for and been hired for clerical positions. Seven of these were appointed at grade GS-4 and two who had shorthand skill were appointed at GS-5. All of these nine employees had subsequently been transferred to "professional" positions in OCR either upon failure to meet Agency typing standards, upon a change of heart regarding overseas assignment, or for some other valid reason. They were all transferred to OCR at the minimum professional entry grade of GS-5. The tenth individual who had been appointed at grade GS-5 for direct assignment to OCR complained because she found that other junior professionals had been appointed at higher entry grades.

3. There is nothing in the records of these individuals to indicate that the Recruitment Officers misled them either deliberately or inadvertently regarding employment opportunities in the Agency. Agency components have given the Office of Personnel very few recruitment requirements for junior professionals which can be filled properly by inexperienced baccalaureate applicants. We are therefore extremely selective in encouraging applications and operating officials are extremely selective in accepting candidates in this category. Such positions as we have been asked to fill occur largely within the DDI Directorate and are in the GS-5 to GS-7 range.

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The starting grade offered to an applicant depends upon his or her academic qualifications and record as related to the education and experience requirements of the job involved. The Deputy Director (Plans) does not usually appoint female college graduates for direct assignment overseas in junior professional positions. As a rule, a young woman who aspires to such assignment must either compete successfully in the Junior Officer Training Program or demonstrate her abilities and willingness to accept a clerical/secretarial position.

4. On the other hand, we have a vast number of junior clerical and stenographic openings to fill. We recruit vigorously in a highly competitive market for applicants in these categories. We do not discourage college graduates who seek these positions in competition with high school or secretarial school graduates. Many candidates therefore may consider themselves educationally and intellectually over-qualified for these positions but their technical skills (i.e., clerical, typing, shorthand) are not superior to those of competing non-college applicants. College graduates often seek these positions as an entree to the Agency with the goal of obtaining an assignment overseas, of progressing to professional positions, or merely to satisfy an ambition to work for the CIA.

5. A number of the female college graduates who are appointed to clerical/secretarial positions are subsequently successful through circumstances, influence, or chance in obtaining transfers to departmental positions in the junior professional category. As external applicants, most of these young women would not have been accepted by the using office for such positions. As fully cleared, partially tested, and immediately available internal applicants, a few represent an attractive recruitment source to offices such as OCR as vacancies develop in the lower professional grades. When such transfers take place, it is logical and proper that the grades of these individuals be advanced as rapidly as they fully acquire and demonstrate their professional competence. As indicated above, the young women who complained to the Inspector were promoted to the minimum professional grade upon their reassignment to OCR. Although some junior professional appointments in OCR are made at GS-6 and at GS-7, it is neither logical nor desirable that all employees reassigned under the conditions in these cases automatically have their grades adjusted to the in-hiring rate of the fully qualified junior professional appointee.

6. Similarly, it is not necessarily logical for employees newly assigned to professional positions to complain that they were not originally employed in such positions. The fact is that they may not have competitively measured up to professional recruitment standards at the time of employment or, either because no appropriate professional vacancies existed at the time or because of their desire for overseas assignment, they may themselves have elected to compete only for clerical or secretarial positions.

7. In responding as I have, I do not mean to close the door on occasional instances of under assignment. In the cases presented for review, I do not believe this has occurred nor do I believe that these young women have a valid basis for anticipating immediate promotions to GS-6 or GS-7. Our placement officers review every reassignment from the clerical to the junior professional ranks and have an opportunity to identify the exceptional case when accelerated advancement is in order because of the individual's qualifications. Similarly, the employing office is free to request accelerated advancement when they obtain a reassigned employee who is over-qualified for the entrance grade. Therefore, I believe the solution lies in continued attention to individual cases rather than in making radical changes in our recruitment and assignment policies and practices.

/s/ Emmett D. Echols  
Emmett D. Echols  
Director of Personnel

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